

The following table illustrates the distribution of land in farms in Douglas County by size. The data are taken from the U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954.

#### The Pattern of Agriculture: Douglas County

**Farms: Number and Size.** In 1954 there were 380 farms in Douglas County, up from 361 in 1950. The number of farms has declined steadily since 1920, when there were 475 farms. Farming in Douglas County is in both large and small farm units. Average farm size in 1954 was 971 acres, which was the seventh highest average in the state. Small farms, however, are numerous in irrigated orchard districts. The Census of Agriculture of 1954 enumerated 380 farms with less than 30 acres. Both the land in farms and the average size of farm have declined from the peaks reached in 1950. Land in farms decreased from 992,408 acres in 1950 to 961,482 acres in 1954. Average size of farm declined from 991 to 971 acres during the same period.

Farms have been getting larger in size and fewer in number since 1920. The trend of land in farms has been steadily upward until 1950, except for a major decline in the early 1920's. Number of farms reached a high of 475 in 1910 and has decreased continuously since then. The greatest decrease came between 1920 and 1925. In the last century the decline has only been 100 farms. Growth in average size of farm in the county was largely a result of expanded cattle ranching, mechanized grain farming and consolidation and leasing of land.

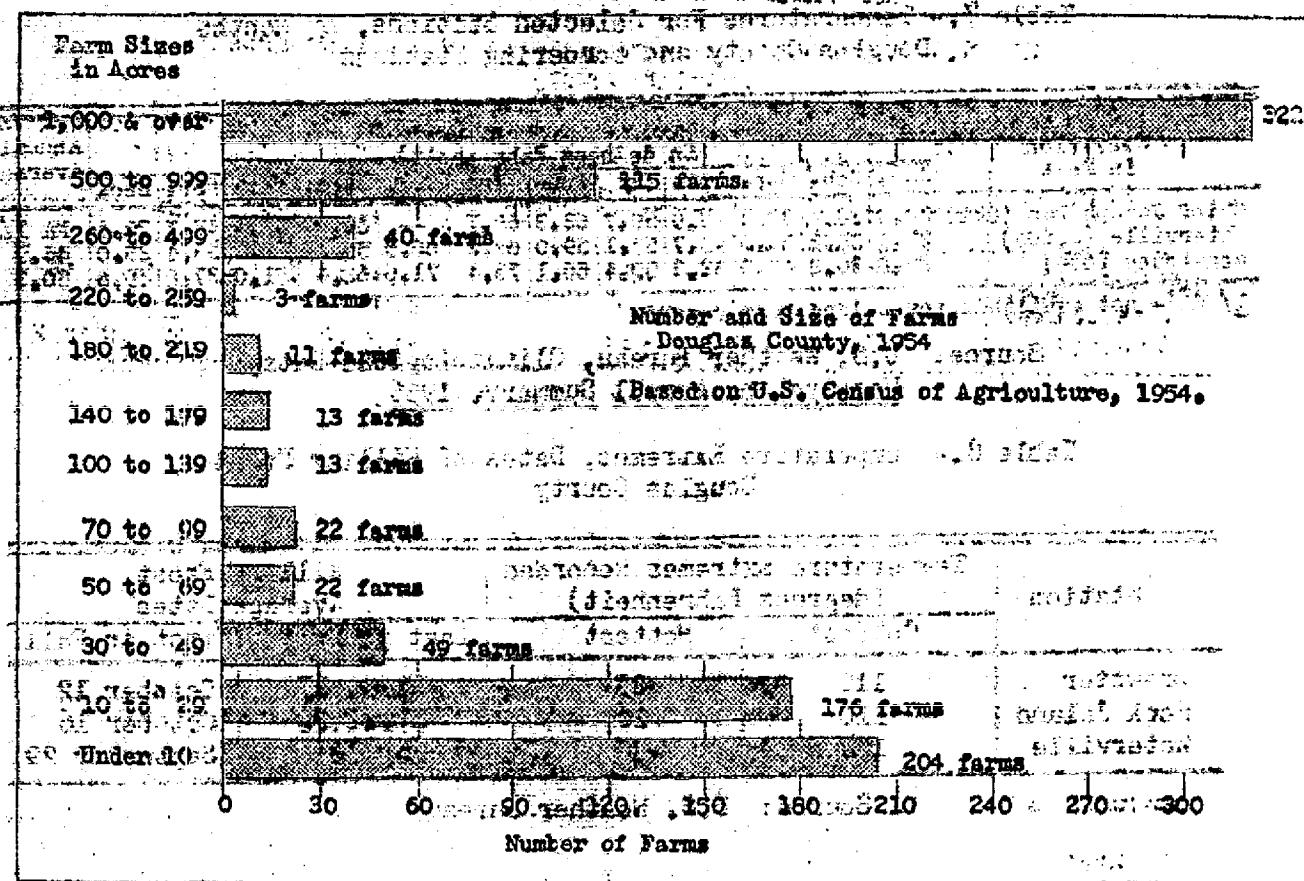


Figure 6.— Number and Size of Douglas County Farms, 1954.

Table 9.- Farms, Number and Average Size, Land in Farms  
Douglas County, 1900-1954

Year	Total Farms in the County	Total County area in farms (acres)	Average size of farms in the county (acres)	Percent of County area in farms
1900	854	421,804	494	35.8
1910	1,730	711,831	415	60.4
1920	1,623	892,223	550	75.7
1925	1,349	628,200	465	53.3
1930	1,214	705,255	580	59.8
1940	1,245	872,490	700	74.0
1945	1,094	992,193	907	84.2
1950	1,001	992,408	991	84.2
1954	990	961,482	971	81.6

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

#### Types of Farms

Douglas County agriculture is divided mainly between two major types of farming. Cash grain farms growing wheat and barley are the most common, accounting for over two-fifths of all farm operations. Fruit farms are second, accounting for a little over one-fourth of the total. Slightly less than one-fourth are classified as miscellaneous. There were also 20 poultry farms, 17 livestock other than dairy and poultry farms, and 18 general farms reported in 1954. Large wheat ranches are typical of the Waterville Plateau and the smaller orchard-growing farms are typical of the Columbia River benchlands and bars.

Table 10.- Types of Farms, Douglas County, 1954

Types of Farms	Number of Farms	Percent of all farms in the county
Total farms in county.....	992	
Field-crop farms.....	438	
Cash-grain.....	438	44.2
Other field-crop.....	---	
Vegetable farms.....	---	
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	266	26.8
Dairy farms.....	---	
Poultry farms.....	20	2.0
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry	17	1.8
General farms.....	18	1.8
Primarily crop.....	17	
Primarily livestock.....	---	
Crop and livestock.....	1	
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms.....	233	23.5

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Large Farms

Large farms with extensive areas of cropland, summer fallow and dryland pasture are characteristic of Douglas County. These large farms have for many years specialized in cash grain farming. There were 322 farms in 1954 with over 1,000 acres and 34 with over 5,000 acres within their boundaries. These large farms contained 203,000 acres, or over four-fifths of all the harvested cropland located in the county.

The major land utilization the large farms is dryland pasture. Second most important in total acreage is land utilized for summer fallow. Harvested cropland is the third largest use of farmland on the large farms. Pastured woodland is next, followed by cropland used only for pasture. Woodland pastured is the least important use of land with only 1,600 acres reported in 1954.

Table II.- Large Farms: Number and General Land Use  
Douglas County, 1954

Land Utilization on Large Farms	Farms 1,000 to 999 acres	Farms 5,000 acres and over
Number of farms	268 farms	34 farms
Land in farms	587,742 acres	256,563 acres
Cropland harvested	169,670 acres	33,406 acres
Cropland used only for pasture	4,350 acres	1,532 acres
Cropland not harvested and not pastured (idle, fallow land)	182,714 acres	42,572 acres
Woodland pastured	8,014 acres	300 acres
Woodland not pastured	1,597 acres	--
Other pasture (not cropland and not woodland)	191,379 acres	170,623 acres

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Farm Ownership and Tenure

The Census of 1954 showed that over half of Douglas County farms were operated by owners. About 46 percent were being operated by part owners, managers and tenants. This varies from the state pattern of farm ownership with 75 percent of all farms operated by owners. Farm ownership has been increasing in Douglas County since 1925. There has also been a gradual uptrend in part-ownership since 1940. Managers and tenants have decreased steadily since 1935. Although the agriculture of the county is adapted to tenant farming or manager operation these forms have become relatively less important.

In acreage terms the most important form of tenure is part-ownership. Tenants were second, while owners were third. Managers were of least importance. The acreage held by full and part-owners has fallen slightly since 1950. This trend of less acreage held by full owners is probably the result of the high initial cost of entering agriculture today, especially in a county which has a high percentage of cash-grain farms.

Table 12.. Farm Tenancy, Number and Percent of Farms  
By Tenure of Operator, Douglas County.  
1925-1954

Year	Number Farms in County	Full Owners		Part Owners		Managers		Tenants	
		number of farms	percent of all farms						
1925	1,349	748	54.5	297	22.0	34	3.5	270	20.0
1930	1,214	589	48.5	288	23.7	41	3.4	296	24.4
1935	1,368	673	49.2	280	20.5	50	3.6	365	26.7
1940	1,245	604	48.5	391	31.4	30	2.4	220	17.7
1945	1,094	572	52.3	352	32.2	19	1.7	151	13.8
1950	1,001	511	51.0	340	34.0	13	1.3	137	13.7
1954	990	540	54.1	333	33.6	15	1.5	102	10.3

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

#### Farm Facilities

In 1954 Douglas County farm homes and farm operations were better equipped with household conveniences and labor saving devices than in earlier Census periods. Farmers in this county enjoy an extensive electrical service. Almost 95 percent of the farm homes and buildings in the county were equipped with electricity in 1954. Over three-quarters reported having telephones.

Table 13.. Specified Facilities and Equipment on Farms  
Douglas County, 1954

Facility or Equipment Item	Number of Farms Using	Percent of All Farms in County Equipped
Telephone.....	757	76.3
Electricity.....	939	94.7
Television set.....	228	23.0
Piped running water.....	915	92.2
Home freezer.....	469	42.3
Electric pig brooder.....	13	1.3
Power feed grinder.....	117	14.8
Milking machine.....	10	1.0
Grain combines.....	444	44.8
Corn pickers.....	--	--
Pick-up balers.....	45	4.5
Field forage harvesters.....	22	2.7
Artificial ponds, reservoirs and earth tanks.....	150	14.8
Motortrucks.....	837	84.4
Tractors.....	830	83.6
Automobiles.....	911	91.8

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Washington State averages for these facilities were 97 and 74 percent, respectively. Use of television sets is low mainly because of the county's remoteness. Slightly under one-fourth of the county's farms had television sets. Most farms have piped running water, and over two-fifths of them have refrigeration in the form of home freezers.

Farms are well mechanized. The last Census showed that about 84 percent had tractors and motor trucks. The ownership of automobiles was much higher than the national farm average. Douglas County ranked seventh in the state in grain combines.

#### Farm Values

Farmland and farm buildings have increased in value greatly since 1940. Value per farm has risen fourfold since 1940, and average value per acre has about tripled. An average farm was valued at nearly \$40,000 in 1955, compared to about \$11,000 in 1940. Value has been added by the general rise in land prices, farm improvements and additions of farmland, machinery and buildings in the last 15 years.

Table 14.- Value of Farm Property  
Douglas County, 1900-1954

Year	Total Value All Farm Property in County	County Average Value Per Farm (dollars)	County Average Value Per Acre (dollars)
1900	\$ 3,587,589	\$ 4,154	\$ 8.40
1910	22,617,695	13,073	31.75
1920	35,559,017	21,909	40.00
1930	18,647,620	15,360	26.00
1940	14,049,914	11,285	16.00
1950	32,173,111	32,141	34.00
1954	47,083,360	47,574	49.00

Source: U.S. Census; Agriculture

#### Farm Residence and Operation

Part-time operation is important in Douglas County agriculture. In 1954 slightly over two-fifths of the county's farmers were operating on a part-time basis. Almost three-fifths of those working off their farms earned more from this nonfarm employment than from their farms. A total of 261 farmers worked off their farms 100 days or more. There are numerous opportunities for farmers to work seasonally in construction, food processing, government employment and fruit orchards. Much of the farm work in the county is seasonal with a cash crop being grown. This leaves a period in winter and early spring in which farmers are idle and available for off-farm employment.

#### Farmland Utilization

Typical of north central Washington the major type of farmland utilization is in dryland range pastures. In Douglas County about two-fifths of the farmland was used as dryland range pasture. Second largest use was summer

fallowing of wheat land to conserve and accumulate soil moisture and about 28 percent of the acreage in farms was used in this manner during 1954. The third major use was harvested cropland. A total of 250,000 acres or slightly over one-fourth of Douglas County farmland was harvested for crops in 1954. Other land, including wasteland, house lots and roads totaled about 52,000 acres or slightly over 5 percent of all the county's farmland. The Census showed a decline of 30,000 acres in land in farms between 1949 and 1954. Despite this decline, harvested cropland expanded 7,000 acres during the same period.

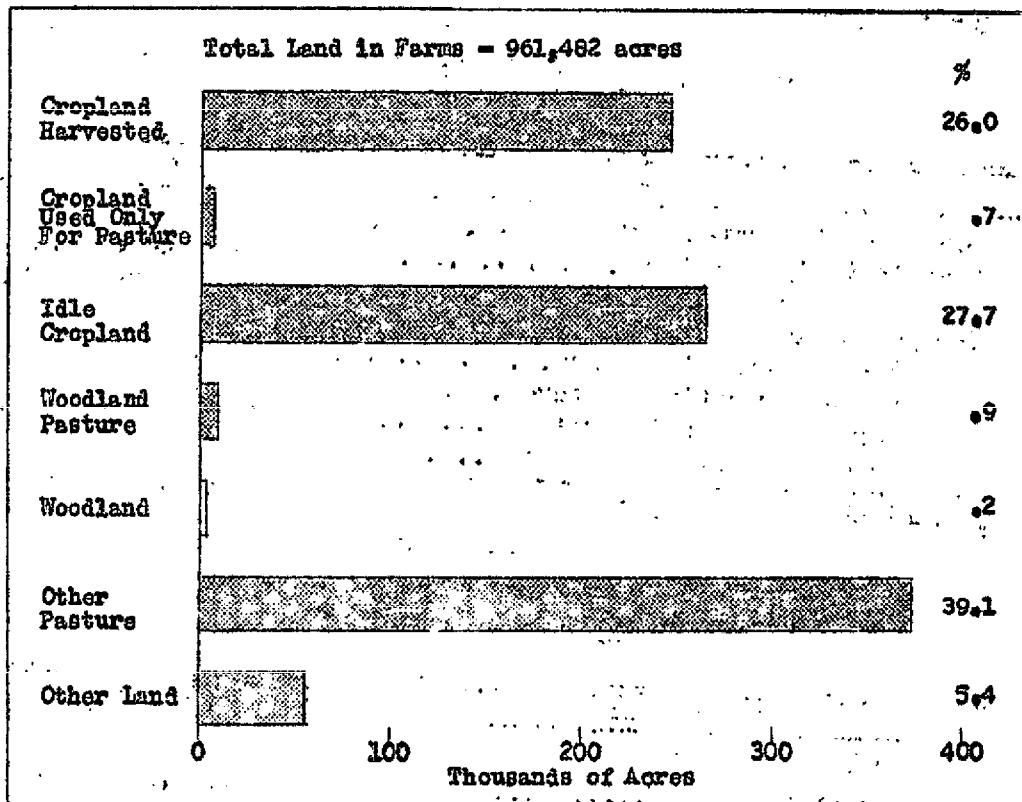


Figure 7.- Utilization of Farmland in Douglas County, 1954.

#### Irrigation and Facilities

Douglas County ranked tenth in the state in irrigated cropland harvested during 1954. The number of farms using irrigation had increased about ten percent from 1950 to 1954. There were 459 farms in 1950 and 510 farms in 1954 that reported irrigation. Over the years the number of farms using irrigation has fluctuated somewhat, but the acreage of land receiving water has trended upward. In 1954 there were 10,781 acres irrigated in Douglas County; of this total some 10,355 acres were irrigated cropland. Only 446 acres of pasture were irrigated.

Fruit was by far the largest single crop harvested from irrigated land. A total of 6,644 acres of 458 farms or about two-thirds of the total irrigated cropland was in fruit crops. Hay was next with 1,385 acres irrigated. Alfalfa was the most widely irrigated hay crop with 1,283 acres reported. Grains ranked third in importance of irrigated crops with about 1,200 acres reported. Two-thirds of this was wheat with about 700 acres being in winter wheat.

As far as On-hay pasture and grain land is the most extensive irrigation systems used being are sprinklers. The canal or ditch system is more commonly used in the county as a whole. This is generally the favorite system in fruit orchards near the Columbia River, in the irrigated areas. Irrigated land is divided into two classes, the second being irrigated by canals, pipes and overhead sprinkler systems.

Table 15.-Irrigated Farms, Number and Acreage

Douglas County, 1950 and 1954

Item	1950	1954
Number of irrigated farms.....	159	510
Land in irrigated farms.....	94,633 acres	149,902 acres
Land irrigated 1/.....	8,428 acres	10,781 acres
Irrigated land in farms according to use:		
Farms irrigating crops.....	137	501
Farms irrigating pasture.....	35	59
Acres of crops irrigated.....	7,759	10,335
Acres of pasture irrigated.....	246	446

1/ Includes land irrigated by canals, pipes and overhead sprinkler systems.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Table 16.- Douglas County's Rank Compared With Other Washington Counties

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity	Year
<u>General</u>			
Land area.....	18	1,178,240 acres	1954
Number of farms.....	24	990 farms	1954
Land in farms--percent.....	5	81.6 percent	1954
Average size of farms.....	7	971 acres	1954
Cropland harvested.....	37	249,888 acres	1954
Rural farm population.....	23	4,028 persons	1950
Total county population.....	31	10,817 persons	1950
<u>Cash farm income</u>			
Value of all farm products sold..	11	16,815,217 dollars	1954
Value of livestock sold.....	27	866,223 dollars	1954
Value of crops sold.....	8	15,948,910 dollars	1954
<u>Livestock on farms</u>			
All cattle and calves.....	25	16,035 head	1954
Milk cows.....	35	610 head	1954
Hogs.....	17	2,077 head	1954
Chickens.....	23	42,871 birds	1954
Horses and mules.....	16	1,040 head	1954
Sheep and lambs.....	19	1,818 head	1954
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>			
Value of dairy products sold....	38	24,490 dollars	1954
Whole milk sold.....	37	329,000 pounds	1954
Value of poultry products sold.....	20	203,732 dollars	1954
Chickens sold.....	18	47,939 birds	1954
Eggs sold.....	21	334,400 dozen	1954
<u>Important crops harvested</u>			
Wheat.....	2	178,307 acres	1954
Barley.....	5	39,896 acres	1954
Fruits.....	4	6,781 acres	1954

Source: U.S. Censuses of Agriculture, 1950, 1954.